

Radiological Health Program

X-RAY BULLETIN

Re-issued December 1, 2004

Policy on Bone Densitometry Equipment and Operator Licensure November 1, 1999

This is the Virginia Department of Health, Radiological Health Program's first issuance of regulatory guidance concerning Bone Densitometry Equipment and Operator Licensure of the equipment. Currently, the Radiation Protection Regulations, of 1988 does not specifically address bone density x-ray equipment; however, the equipment does produce ionizing radiation and therefore is within the scope of these regulations. Operator licensure of this equipment is required by law and is regulated by the Department of Health Professions, Board of Medicine.

The Program has since obtained further data from both public and private inspectors which requires additional regulatory guidance. These changes are itemized below and reflect the anticipated formal changes to the regulations. A state X-Ray inspection shall be conducted by a state or private inspector every three years or after major repairs whichever is sooner.

1. Quality control checks must be performed according to manufacturer's specifications. This may involve the use of a phantom. Quality control results should be documented before the unit is used on patients to ensure the values are within manufacturer tolerances. Operator's manuals should be available for reference.
2. Each facility shall maintain an X-ray log or other record-keeping device containing the patient's name, type of examination performed, the date of the examination, and the name of the person conducting the examination.
3. The X-ray equipment should have a Warning Statement, legible and accessible to view. There should be some indication of radiation exposure during the exam either visual or audible.
4. A scatter radiation survey should be conducted around the unit during operation and at the operator's position. A diagram should be prepared indicating the survey readings. Other data, if feasible, would be radiation exposure output, reproducibility, and HVL. If it is determined that the operator is likely to receive 10% of the maximum permissible dose (MPD) in a calendar quarter, dosimetry will be required.
5. Individuals operating the equipment must be licensed by the Board of Medicine. Individuals working in hospitals and nursing homes are exempt from the licensing requirement. A limited license is available for bone density equipment. More information can be obtained by calling the Board of Medicine at (804) 662-9908.